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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001343

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

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TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: RIZEIGAT ARAB LEADER PROPOSES GRASSROOTS CIVIL
SOCIETY WORKSHOPS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1009
1B. KHARTOUM 1209

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: CDA Fernandez called on prominent Rizeigat Arab and civil society leader Dr. Waleed Madibbo Mousa September 2 to discuss the latest developments in Darfur. Madibbo stated that the NCP regime is incapable of solving the Darfur crisis, which is increasingly threatening to destabilize the entire region. With the NCP at its weakest in years, Madibbo urged that now is the time to mobilize civil society to promote indigenous solutions to Darfur's problems. He scorned "elitist" Darfuri civil society conferences abroad and urged USG support for his plans to conduct grassroots workshops to each of Darfur's municipalities. He urged CDA Fernandez to further intensify outreach to the Arabs of Darfur and help them distance themselves from the NCP. He asserted that the USG's current Sudan policy is exacerbating tribal divisions, and urged that the USG encourage a more holistic approach to Sudanese politics. He expressed hope for a Darfur-South Sudan coalition for the 2009 elections, which he predicted could take the Presidency. He also requested that USAID look beyond humanitarian aid in Darfur and engage in development projects in pockets where there is relative stability and where the social fabric has not been fully rent by five years of conflict. End Summary.

12. (C) Madibbo stated that he has come to believe the NCP will never allow Darfur to stabilize, for fear that a stable Darfur was a threat to the NCP's grip on power Khartoum. CDA noted the irony is instability in Darfur has now caused instability in Khartoum, and expressed concern that the NCP may be unable to come up with a solution because of its own internal contradictions and conflict management strategy. Madibbo concurred, stating that "they are incapable and they have no vision" for Darfur. He stated that if left unchecked by the international community, instability in Darfur could easily spread throughout the "Sudanic" region, all the way west across Sahelian NW Africa to Mauritania. Madibbo was unimpressed with efforts by the international community to date to solve the crisis, and was particularly critical of the USG's commitment to an incompetent UNAMID. Noting that the massacre at Kalma camp occurred mere miles from a UNAMID base, Madibbo stated that funding UNAMID is "a waste of taxpayer money." Rather, it was time to resort to unconventional means by promoting civil society to help Darfuris organize themselves. While Madibbo exhibited respect for tribal elders, he agreed with CDA Fernandez that Darfur's problems have grown too complex for them to grasp. Instead, he advocated for a tripartite political alliance between the Fur, Masalit and Rizeigat Arabs which would approximate Darfur's traditional power sharing arrangements. Such an

alliance could effectively counter both the divisive policies of the NCP and the domineering Zaghawa in Darfur, he said. "The NCP would like to exterminate" the aggressive and warlike Zaghawa, he noted, but the way to challenge these innate raiders is politically by building a new Darfur polity.

¶3. (C) When queried by CDA Fernandez on the best way to organize civil society efforts, Madibbo stated that "I am very much against elitist attempts to mobilize civil society," such as the overseas conferences held in Heidelberg and Geneva (or even in Khartoum). He stated that rather, "we have to organize civil society on the ground, even if we pay a price in harassment by the security forces." Madibbo's consultancy, "Governance Bureau," has conducted a pilot workshop on Ed-Daien, South Darfur that he hopes to replicate in all 33 of Darfur's municipalities. (Note: Ed-Daien was also the site of the annual equestrian festival organized by Madibbo encouraging reconciliation between African and Arab tribes (Reftel A). End Note). The model is to nominate and bring together "decent, hardworking citizens" in a forum for dialogue for the betterment of the local community. He noted that in Ed-Daien, 77 out of 80 invitees attended, which was "a clear signal that civil society has not been emasculated" in Darfur. Madibbo sees his role as civil society organizer as a calling and stated that "I'm willing to risk my life and career for the sake of Darfurians." To that end, he urged CDA Fernandez to assist him not with money but logistical support in the form of transportation, getting the UN to be helpful in bringing Darfuris together in Darfur. "We'll be doing Sudan and the international community a favor by taking the Darfur problem into our own hands," he said. To that end, Madibbo also asked CDA to continue to reach out to the Arabs

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of Darfur and help them distance themselves from the NCP, "the time is now ripe for this". CDA Fernandez acknowledged that the Janjaweed themselves were marginalized people, and many now realize they have been used by Khartoum as dupes. He agreed for the need to assist them find a way out and reach a "soft landing", noting how he has met frequently with Darfur Arabs and delivered the message that they are a part of the solution to Darfur and that they have been manipulated by the NCP.

¶4. (C) Madibbo told CDA he believes US policy in Sudan was serving to divide Sudan along tribal lines. CDA Fernandez acknowledged the need for a more holistic approach, but rejected the accusation and noted how the USG has encouraged the SPLM to commit to a national agenda and coalition-building. But he also noted that tribalism was a reality in Sudan, and Madibbo concurred. "Nehru used to say that a village is the building block in India," said Madibbo. "In Sudan, it's the tribe." But despite all the conflict along tribal lines, it is not all bad. Madibbo expressed confidence that tribal identity "can become very malleable." He expressed hope for increased interaction between different tribes, especially in the midst of a possible 2009 election. Noting how Darfur and the South constitute two-thirds of Sudan's population, Madibbo postulated that if Southerners could accept a Darfuran as their presidential candidate with a Southern running mate, that ticket could easily take the election. CDA agreed that this was an intriguing idea, noting that while Northern Sudanese would be unlikely to vote for a non-Muslim, they had less qualms about voting for a non-Arab Muslim.

¶5. (C) Echoing a theme he raised with SE Williamson (Reftel B), Madibbo also advocated for development aid to Darfur, arguing that construction of health clinics or other infrastructure would help bring peace to the region. He said that the Qataris had recently given \$30 million to Islamist aid organizations for Darfur but he was encouraging them to be more forthcoming with a wider range of local NGOs. Madibbo noted that throughout Darfur there are pockets of relative stability where the social fabric has not been destroyed where a little bit of development could promote real social

peace and reconciliation. CDA heartily agreed and promised to discuss such projects with USAID, adding that USAID has already done some projects but there is generalized concern across the international development community about security and about potential regime manipulation of development assistance.

¶6. (C) Comment: While the dynamic Madibbo's desire to help Darfur is genuine, political ambitions are clearly not far from his mind and therefore slightly cloud his analysis of realistic solutions to the Darfur conflict. His views on the importance of civil society are valid, but he is dismissive of the power of the rebel movements and the potential role for the JMST in the peace process. While we agree with Maddibo that civil society should play a much greater role in proposing and participating in solutions, the mediation process is more important to finding a political solution than Maddibo is prepared to accept. He is absolutely right about the continuing need to reach out to Darfur's disillusioned and restless Arab tribes, who are not now the arrogant janjaweed of 2003 serving as pliable cannon fodder for SAF and NISS. An African-Arab reconciliation in Darfur will be essential for Darfur's future although it could also well mean the end of NCP (and possibly) Khartoum's rule in Darfur. Darfur Arab tribe outreach is an ongoing embassy priority whenever we can evade NCP restrictions on our doing so. End comment.

FERNANDEZ